

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2 and 4-7 are pending in the application. Claims 1 and 2 are amended, withdrawn claim 3 is cancelled, and claims 4-7 are newly added. Reconsideration of the rejection and allowance of the pending application in view of the following remarks are respectfully requested.

As an initial matter, Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for indicating that claim 2 includes allowable subject matter.

Applicants also thank the Examiner for accepting the drawings filed on June 9, 2005, for acknowledging Applicants' claim for foreign priority and receipt of the certified copy of the priority document, and for considering all of the documents cited in the Information Disclosure Statement filed on September 7, 2005.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §112, 2nd paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. Specifically, the Examiner asserted that several claim limitations were unclear and/or lacked antecedent basis. Applicants have amended claim 1 paying particular attention to concerns raised by the Examiner, and respectfully submit that the amendment overcomes each of the issues raised by the Examiner. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the 35 U.S.C. §112, 2nd paragraph rejection.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Asai et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,334,840). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection for at least the following reasons.

Applicants' independent claim 1 recites a tool exchange device which includes, inter alia, a tool including first and second step portions formed in an L-shape and having vertical

restriction surfaces and horizontal engagement surfaces directed radially outwardly from lower ends of the vertical restriction surfaces on two sides of a main body portion of the tool, a first engagement member having a first engagement projection piece opposing a horizontal engagement surface of the first step portion and having an end surface in abutment against a vertical restriction surface of the first step portion, and a second engagement member having a second engagement projection piece having an intermediate part opposed to a horizontal engagement surface of the second step portion, and having end surfaces formed on sides of the intermediate part in abutment against portions of the main body portion formed on sides of the second step portion.

Asai et al. discloses an electric-component (EC) mounting system 10 which includes an adaptor 100. The adaptor 100 is fitted in a receiving hole 104 formed in a nozzle holding portion 102, and is held by a plurality of holding members 106 supported by the nozzle holding portion 102. See, e.g., Figure 3 and col. 13, lines 33-47 of Asai et al.

In the Office Action, the Examiner asserts that Asai's adaptor 100 has L-shaped sections, and asserts that Asai's nozzle holding portion 102 reads on an engagement member. The Examiner acknowledges that Asai et al. does not disclose two engagement members, but asserts that it would have been obvious to form Asai's nozzle holding portion 102 in two parts.

Applicants respectfully submit that Asai et al. fails to disclose or suggest a second engagement member which has an engagement projection piece having an intermediate part opposed to a horizontal engagement surface of a step portion of a tool, and end surfaces formed on sides of the intermediate part in abutment against portions of a main body portion of the tool formed on sides of the step portion of the tool, as recited in Applicants' independent claim 1.

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that Asai et al. fails to disclose or suggest a tool exchange device which includes a tool including first and second step portions formed in an L-shape and having vertical restriction surfaces and horizontal engagement surfaces directed radially outwardly from lower ends of the vertical restriction surfaces on two sides of a main body portion of the tool, a first engagement member having a first engagement projection piece opposing a horizontal engagement surface of the first step portion and having an end surface in abutment against a vertical restriction surface of the first step portion, and a second engagement member having a second engagement projection piece having an intermediate part opposed to a horizontal engagement surface of the second step portion, and having end surfaces formed on sides of the intermediate part in abutment against portions of the main body portion formed on sides of the second step portion, as recited in Applicants' independent claim 1. Applicants note that an example of such tool exchange device is illustrated in Figure 2A, which shows a tool exchange device 10 that engages a tool 1 at three engagement points A, B and C.

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the invention recited in Applicants' claim 1 is not obvious in view of Asai et al., and thus, respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the 35 U.S.C. §103(a) rejection and allow claim 1.

In the Office Action, the Examiner objected to claim 2 as being dependent upon rejected base claim 1, but indicated that claim 2 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants have amended claim 2 by rewriting it in independent form, and thus, respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the objection and allow claim 2.

Applicants have added new claims 4-7 for the Examiner's consideration, of which claim 6 is independent. Claim 6 is directed towards a tool exchange device and recites features similar to those of claim 1. Applicants respectfully submit that claim 6 is in condition for allowance for

reasons similar to those of claim 1, and respectfully request that the Examiner indicate such in the next Office communication.

New claims 4, 5 and 7 depend from claims 1, 2 and 6, respectively, and recite that the end surfaces of the second engagement member formed on the sides of the intermediate part are shaped as an arc. Applicants respectfully submit that this feature is not disclosed or suggested by Asai et al. Applicants respectfully submit that new claims 4, 5 and 7 are in condition for allowance at least in view of their dependency from claims 1, 2 and 6, and respectfully request that the Examiner indicate such in the next Office communication.

Based on the above, it is respectfully submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

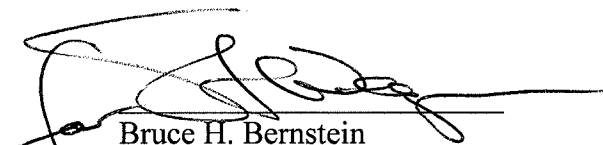
Entry and consideration of the present amendment, reconsideration of the outstanding Office Action, and allowance of the present application and all of the claims therein are respectfully requested and believed to be appropriate. Applicants have made a sincere effort to place the present invention in condition for allowance and believe that they have done so.

Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should an extension of time be necessary to maintain the pendency of this application, including any extensions of time required to place the application in condition for allowance by an Examiner's Amendment, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fee to Deposit Account No. 19-0089.

Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding this response, or the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
Kanji HATA et al.


Bruce H. Bernstein
Reg. No. 29,027

July 13, 2007
GREENBLUM & BERNSTEIN, P.L.C.
1950 Roland Clarke Place
Reston, VA 20191
(703) 716-1191

Steven Wegman
Reg. No. 31,438